

REMARKS

Claims 1-25 are pending in this application. Claims 10-25 have been withdrawn. By this Amendment, claims 1 and 6 are amended. No new matter is added. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections are respectfully requested.

Entry of the amendments is proper under 37 C.F.R. §1.116 because the amendments: (a) place the application in condition for allowance for the reasons discussed herein; (b) do not raise any new issue requiring further search and/or consideration since the amendments amplify issues previously discussed throughout prosecution; and (c) place the application in better form for appeal, should an appeal be necessary. The amendments are necessary and were not earlier presented because they are made in response to arguments raised in the final rejection. Entry of the amendments is thus respectfully requested.

I. The Claims Define Patentable Subject Matter

The Office Action rejects claims 1-3 and 6-9 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) over U.S. Patent Publication No. 2003/0029565 to Suzuki et al. (Suzuki); rejects claims 1-3 and 6-9 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) over U.S. Patent No. 6,391,787 to Dhindsa et al. (Dhindsa); rejects claim 4 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Suzuki or Dhindsa; and rejects claim 5 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Suzuki or Dhindsa in view of U.S. Patent Publication No. 2002/0139478 to Ma et al. (Ma). The rejections are respectfully traversed.

Independent claims 1 and 6 recite, *inter alia* "the second region having a height lower than that of the first region extending outwardly from the outer perimeter of the first portion to the outer perimeter of the quartz ring." Support for the amendment can be found in the specification at, for example, Fig. 2C (elements A1 and A2) and Fig. 2B.

The passage and figure of Suzuki relied upon as disclosing the recited feature fails to disclose a quartz ring where the second region extending outwardly from the outer perimeter

of the first portion to the outer perimeter of the quartz ring has a height lower than that of the first region. Thus, Suzuki fails to teach each and every feature of claims 1 and 6.

The passage of Dhindsa relied upon by the Office Action as disclosing the recited feature merely refers to the upper electrode 10 and the step 11 of the upper electrode 10. Applicants respectfully disagree that the passage relates to the quartz ring of the presently claimed invention.

Furthermore, Applicants respectfully point out that the thickness of the outer perimeter of the edge ring 17 is thicker than the inner perimeter as disclosed in Dhindsa (see Fig. 1A), whereas in the presently claimed invention, the thickness of the outer perimeter of the focus ring 20 has a smaller thickness than that of the inner perimeter (see Figs. 2B and 2C of the specification). In the presently claimed invention, the thicker inner perimeter enables the repeated restoration of the focus ring, so the thickness of the inner perimeter is thicker than that of the outer perimeter.

Thus, Dhindsa fails to disclose a second region having a height lower than that of the first region.

Ma discloses a plasma chamber apparatus and method having a process kit capable of reducing or eliminating electrical arcing from exposed metal at the perimeter of a workpiece (Abstract).

Ma fails to cure the deficiencies of Dhindsa or Suzuki. Accordingly, the applied references, alone or in any combination, fail to teach or disclose each and every feature of claims 1 and 6.

For at least these reasons, independent claims 1 and 6, and their dependent claims, are patentable over the applied references. Thus, withdrawal of the rejection of the claims is respectfully requested.

II. Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of the pending claims are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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